

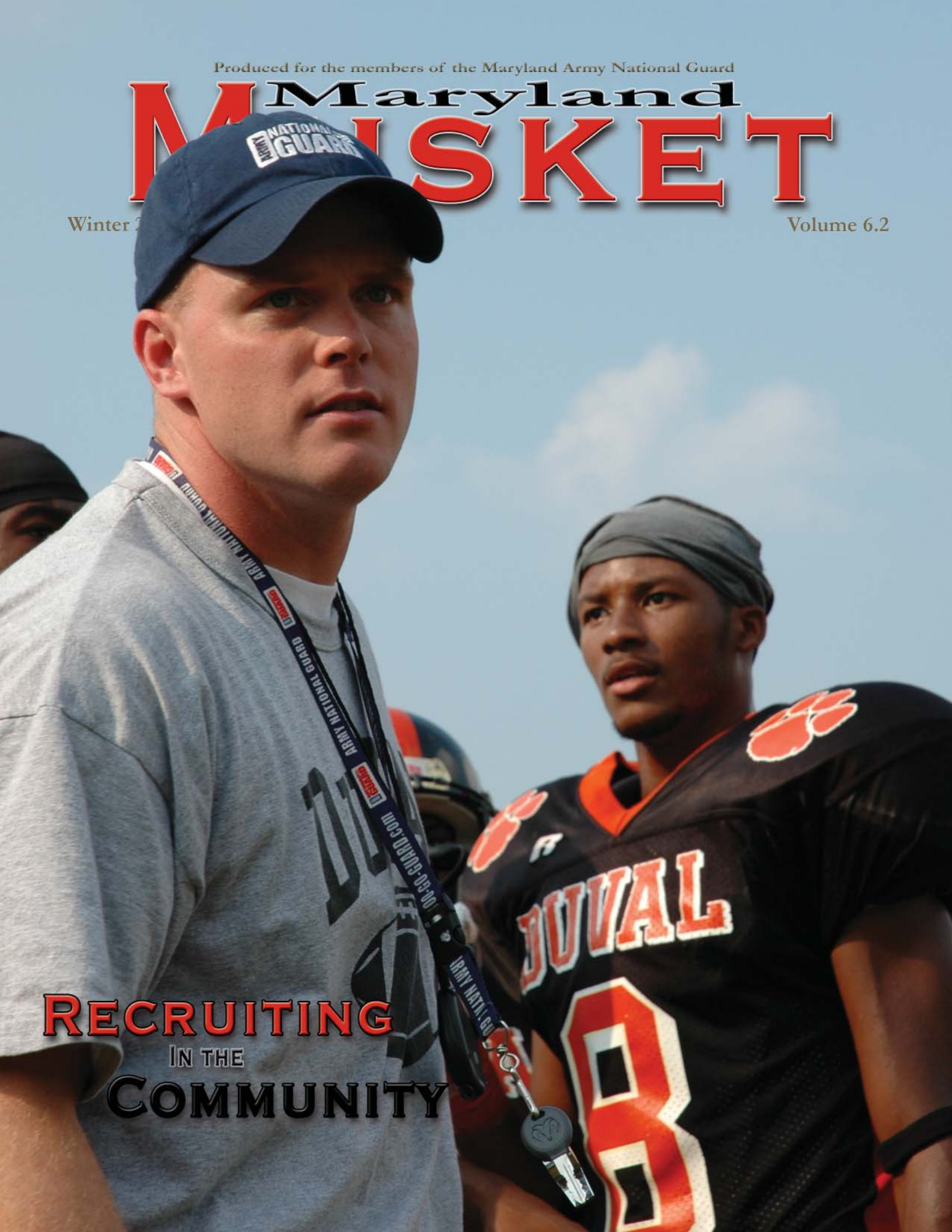
Produced for the members of the Maryland Army National Guard

Maryland MUSKET

Winter 2008

Volume 6.2

RECRUITING
IN THE
COMMUNITY





Air Force Maj. Betsey Lefebvre, a dental technician assigned to the 175th Wing of the Maryland Air National Guard, prepares to extract a tooth using part of a humanitarian effort to supply basic medical needs to the country. Photo by Spc. Loni Kingston

Maryland Muskett

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Sgt. S. Patrick McCollum

Sgt. Isolda McClelland

Spc. Luke Rollins



local anesthetic at a school in Skugric, Bosnia as

WINTER 2006

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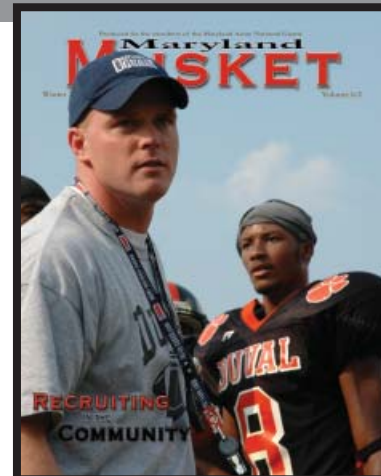
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Drug Demand Reduction unit goes to Maryland school

The Maryland Musket is produced in the interest of the members of the Maryland Army National Guard, using federal funds under provisions of AR 360-81 by the 29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment of the Maryland Army National Guard. The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the Army, or the Army National Guard. Printed Circulation: 1,000.

on the cover...

Staff Sgt. Harold Ziegler, an Assistant Coach for DuVal High School in Prince George's County, scans the field while a DuVal player looks on. Photo by Staff Sgt. Howard Hodges.



Text and photography by Spc. John Higgins

NEW COLORS NEW HOMELAND Security Mission

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md--
“Nine eleven got us thinking: bring everything together with the dedicated mission,” said Lt. Col. Shannon Brown of the 1st Battalion, 224 Aviation Security and Support Regiment in her speech given at the unit’s recent activation ceremony.

Everything has been brought together in this new kind of unit in several senses. After it’s reactivation in 2001, the mission of the 1-224th has been changed to augment homeland security, including local police and emergency response units, said Maj. Michael Krause, the battalion executive officer.

That augmentation takes the form of not only 419 personnel from several states, some as far away as Alaska, but also in terms of more helicopters specifically modified for the mission, said Brown. Those resources are also spread among eight states from Maine to Virginia, making the unit’s coverage one of the largest in the nation, when compared to other unit’s spread among three or four states.

One of those modifications is an infrared capable camera of both recording and

transmitting images in real time, said Capt. Kirk E. Regina, commander of Alpha Company of the 1-224th.

All these changes and additions come together in a unit like nothing ever seen in the Guard before the 1-224th, a point that Battalion Intelligence Officer Capt. Andrei Illias emphasized.

“I like being the first to do anything and this is a first for the army. It’s a little bit ground breaking I think,” said Illias.

Ground breaking not only refers to the method, personnel and model but also the equipment the unit will be using, including many helicopters that will be outfitted not only with cameras, but with communications equipment that allows for coordination with multiple emergency personnel in any given situation, said Brown.

“They are ready, they are here and they are ready to support,” said Brown as she concluded her speech.

W ND ty



Top: Spc. Landraous Pabron, the color bearer for the 1-224th Aviation Security and Support Battalion, stands with the new colors after they have been presented at the unit's activation ceremony, Sunday, October 15. The 224th was deactivated in 1995 and re-activated in 2001 with its new mission of security and support.

Left: Command Sgt. Major David Jenkins, of the 224th, uncovers the new colors of the 224th as Pabron looks on.

Signal Change

The 129th Signal Battalion disbands and is now dispersed around the state

Walking into Ruhl Armory, Towson, Md. there was always the sound of busy people. Today was different. Soldiers prepared for the daunting but necessary task of counting, inspecting and documenting equipment in preparation for the upcoming transformation.

Transformation is the transition of existing forces from a larger division-based structure to a smaller brigade-based structure. Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 129th Signal Battalion is one of the many units and divisions in the Army National Guard that has gone through the transformation process.

The 129th was made up of four company size units located throughout the state of Maryland, and whose roots date back to D-Day in Normandy. The battalion operated

mobile subscriber equipment, a system that uses radios and switches to facilitate communication in the field.

The units are now part of a brigade combat team and their MSE equipment will soon be replaced by high-tech satellite communication equipment. They

are no longer a single battalion but part of many sections of the brigade, a figurative piece of a major plug-and-play machine.

“The preparation for this to happen took a lot of coordination from commanders, Soldiers, and families,” said Capt. William Prugh the last company commander of HHC.

Many Soldiers took part in the transformation.

“Pre-planning is the key,” said Lt. Col Gary Appel, operations officer of HHC. “Knowing what the time line is, packing away unused equipment, and making sure that Soldiers are informed.”

It was not an easy task.

“Many people don’t realize how much equipment a signal battalion has,” said Appel. “We have equipment on top of equipment and while we prepare for this transition we still have to train.”



Text and photograph by Sgt. Isolda McClelland

Packing the equipment may have been the easy part.

“Many [Soldiers] have been a part of this battalion for their entire military career,” said Sgt. 1st Class Mark Buric, operations non-commissioned officer with HHC, who has been with the unit 16 years. “The command has a lot on their hands trying to figure out what personnel are needed in which location and how many need to find a new home.”

For Buric, once a Marine, the BCT concept isn’t new.

“All the Army is doing is setting up the teams that the Marines have been using since 1942,” said Buric. He added he believes the transformation will make the Guard lighter and able to rapidly deploy.

His advice to his fellow Soldiers is to “be flexible, stay the course, remember you are a Soldier and although it will be stressful it will be much better in the long run.”

But, the transformation may be more difficult for some Soldiers than others.

“I have served under every battalion commander here,” said Lt. Col. James Fignar, commander of the 129th. The battalion’s legacy will live on in the halls of the armory and in the heart of many of its former Soldiers, who will always remember the unit’s motto “Light the Fires.”

“Many [Soldiers]
have been a part
of this battalion
for their entire
military career,”

-Sgt. 1st Class Mark Buric,
operations non-commissioned
officer-

*Soldiers of the 129th Signal Battalion
prepare to board a UH-60 Black Hawk
helicopter during an Annual Training
mission at Fort Drum, N.Y.*



Major Travis Rambert ascends the 28-foot climbing wall at the officers' professional development weekend.





Officers' Training

Text by 1st Lt. Cara Thompson and photograph by Spc. Keith Muckler

More than 400 officers throughout the state gathered for officers' professional development training at Camp Fretterd Military Reservation in Reisterstown, Md.

This OPD training, one of three sessions, represented a vital opportunity for all officers in the Maryland Army National Guard to come together as one and build camaraderie within the state.

"We leaders often are so focused on our Soldiers and units that we put our career management and development on the shelf," said Col. Peter Hinz, commander of 58th Troop Command.

The weekend was divided into various sections of hands-on training, briefings, classroom training exercises, computer skills sessions and personal record review.

Officers had a chance to brush up on marksmanship training on the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000. The EST 2000 is an indoor, multi-purpose, multi-lane weapon simulator that is designed to improve individual small arms, crew-served and individual anti-armor training with up-to-date real life, war-time scenarios.

"The EST 2000 is a great resource for my unit because it gives us the feedback that we need to better our marksmanship," said 1st Lt. John M. Fincato, commander of Forward Support Company E, 729th Brigade Support Battalion.

"Some of the officers didn't even know that the EST 2000 system had these capabilities or if they could use it at any time," said Scott Miller, the training aids, devices, simulations and simulators facilitator.

Officers were able to register for an account with the National Guard Bureau Director's Strength Readiness Overview site. The DSRO system lets commanders identify the readiness status of their

Soldiers and maintain visibility of the units' strength readiness posture.

"We are here to show the commanders what right looks like in the system and how to use the system to their advantage," said Sgt. Maj. Franklin J. Wright, Maryland state retention program manager.

At the same time, Sgt. Maj. Timothy Whittman, state logistics sergeant major, instructed the officers on the Maryland Knowledge Online logistics site in order for the commanders to help new supply sergeants in their unit.

Many units presented static displays including an aerial surveillance aircraft, vehicles with high-tech satellite communication capabilities, a CH-47 Chinook and an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter, the newly digital camouflaged minuteman Humvee and a 28-foot climbing wall. The officers had a chance to ask questions about unit's missions and capabilities.

One of the advantages of having the OPD at Camp Fretterd is that officers had a chance to see the location of the 581st Soldier Readiness Company where new recruits come before, in-between and after Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training. It is imperative that they establish and maintain a partnership with 581st SRC to help their units meet their assigned mission, said Lt. Col. Kevin Preston, Maryland Army National Guard's recruiting and retention director.

Saturday night, officers had a chance to develop professional relationships and share personal experiences during downtime.

"This OPD weekend allowed us to devote time and attention to ourselves and to each other to keep us ready and proficient for the near future," said Hinz. "We gained knowledge and techniques to help our Soldiers with their career management and development."

Forgotten Front

It has been more than 11 years since the leaders of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia signed a cease-fire agreement that halted the war in Bosnia.

But the damage was done. More than 200,000 people perished during the conflict. The war was devastating and the scars are visible to this day.

"The economy took a huge hit after the war," said Air Force Lt. Col. Phillip "Randy" Brown, commander of the 175th Medical Group, Maryland Air National Guard. "Fifty percent of the population is without jobs. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are under resourced, they don't have access to medical care; at least not to the level they should."

In July the 175th Med. Group of the Maryland Air National Guard spent a month in their "sister-state" BiH, during their annual training, administering basic aid to local villages.

The humanitarian effort was a joint effort that combined members of the Maryland Air National Guard and Maryland Defense Force with Bosnian soldiers and translators. It was the first mission to bring the three forces together.

Approximately 80 members of the Maryland Military Department ventured to BiH as part of a humanitarian relief mission. Among the group were dentists, optometrists, physicians, physicians' assistants, medics and nurses, many of whom perform their job on the civilian side as well.

Most of these people do their job on a daily basis and are good at their job on the civilian side, said Brown.

The mission gave the troops an opportunity to do something different than the normal annual training,

said Master Sgt. John Wissman, acting first sergeant of the 175th Med. Group.

Preparation for this mission was extensive.

"We embarked upon two site surveys, worked with local non-government organizations, with the local embassy and Eagle Base, Tuzla, said Lt. Col. Steven Benden, commander of the 175th Security Forces Squadron, Maryland Air National Guard. "[We] went out and selected sites. We went to each area and selected schools and/or community centers to set up the medical mission."

A reconnaissance team was sent to BiH a week before the first medical teams to make sure the sites were ready, said Senior Master Sgt. Steve Bloodsworth, senior health technician for the 175th.

"Flyers and radio announcements were made to inform the Bosnians of the mission," said Bloodsworth.

United States Air Forces in Europe provided \$70,000 that was utilized for medication, said Bloodsworth.

Each day the group would travel to individual villages and set up a makeshift clinic, making due with what was available to them.

Triage was the first stop for incoming patients. Interpreters were present to help patients fill out paperwork that described the patients' medical issues.

Once they were finished with their "in-processing" they were sent to the appropriate clinic: dental, optometry, general practice or urgent care. In many instances, patients were

Text and photography by Spc. Loni Kingston



Air Force Lt. Cols. Richard Colgan (left) and Robert Barish of the Maryland Defense Force, attached to the 175th Wing, Maryland Air National Guard, review a patient's heart condition outside a community center in Banovici, Bosnia as part of a joint force effort to supply basic medical assistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

seen at more than one clinic.

Each clinic saw its fair share of patients with their fair share of problems.

"Small children have rampant decay; a lot of adults are already missing many of their teeth," said Lt. Col. Rita Kurek, dentist with the 175th Med. Group.

"My job is to provide basic dental care, help them understand what is causing their decay and teach them preventative measures," said Kurek.

Medical Laboratory Technician, Staff Sgt. Robert Davis of the 175th said the major medical issues that he saw were diabetes and urinary tract

infections.

The medical laboratory technicians provided chemistry testing to further assess the patients' conditions.

Once patients have been treated they either went to the pharmacy for medication or out-processed.

People walked for miles to reach the clinic; in some instances they walked all day to receive medical care.

"There is practically no health care available," said Semsudin Mujic, president of the village of Luka.

Forgotten Front



A local woman is given the gift of sight after not having the proper treatment for many years, as Airman 1st Class [Name] National Guard, tests her new prescription glasses in a schoolhouse in Skugric, Bosnia as part of a joint force [Name] people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Class Jocelyn Campbell of the 175th Wing, Maryland Air Force humanitarian effort to supply medical treatment to the

On an average day medics saw approximately 200 people. However, there are still many people who will continue to go without the critical health care they need.

“It’s a drop in a bucket, but it’s a drop,” said Brown. “It’s a step in the right direction. You have to start somewhere.”

And local residents agreed.

Adem Ustrlic, municipality representative, Bonovici BiH said, “If we help one man, we help the whole world.”

The fulfillment these service members have gained during this mission is immeasurable.

“Seeing the faces of those people who have received care is totally rewarding,” said Wissman.

“I think we all want purpose in life and this is definitely a purpose,” said Brown.

The mission was meant to accomplish two things; provide Airmen with training and to provide medical relief to those in need.

“We are here to train and to make ourselves better medics, but sometimes I think making yourself better is actually helping others and that’s why we are here,” said Brown.

“It’s a drop in a bucket,
but it’s a drop. It’s a step
in the right direction. You
have to start somewhere.”

-Air Force Lt. Col.
Phillip “Randy” Brown,
commander,
175th Medical Group-

Recruiting in the Community





Three recruiters in different locations reflect on the challenges and satisfaction of working within their communities

“Kicking the bo-bo!”

That’s Sgt. 1st Class Leon Carr’s slang for kicking around ideas with anyone he meets. Others might call it “shooting the breeze.” However you define the conversation, it is his way of establishing rapport. And as a recruiter for the Maryland Army National Guard, establishing a rapport with potential enlistees and their families is key to his job.

Working as a recruiter can be challenging, demanding, as well as fulfilling according to many recruiters, but there are multiple ways to tackle this unique job.

To be successful, Carr insists you have to be flexible and approachable and enjoy working with people.

Carr isn’t the only recruiter who uses a casual approach instead of a hard sell.

“I really just play it as it goes,” said Sgt. 1st Class John Pownall, a recruiter in his hometown of Cumberland, Md. “I might just go and talk to them once or twice, trying [to] establish that rapport there before I talk to them really more in detail about the National Guard.”

He said he also makes it a point to “talk



Both Photos: Staff Sgt. Harold Ziegler, an assistant coach for DuVal High School and a Maryland Army National Guard recruiter, spends time at the Prince George's county high school recruiting and coaching.

Recruiting in the Community

to different people, get out there, and know the community, attend different events, and let the community know that you're there to help, you're willing to give back, you're not there to just take, take, take."

So Pownall gets involved with schools every day. He has loaned equipment to ROTC groups, allowed students to sample the pre-packaged food Soldiers eat in the field and spoken before school clubs.

Staff Sgt. Harold Ziegler, who works out of Laurel, Md., credits growing up with 11 brothers and sisters for his ability to relate well with others. It must work – he's personally spoken to more than 300 potential enlistees in just four months. He's even done early morning workouts with recruits prepping for basic training. Currently he helps coach a local high school football team.

There are many hurdles for a recruiter whatever their approach. With images from Iraq being shown daily on television, TV news is "not always a good thing" for recruiting, said Pownall.

"There are days of frustration," said Carr, who has been a

recruiter for two years. Still, he said he likes the idea that he can have an impact on young men and women by "changing their lifestyle" with not only extra money and educational assistance, but by helping them pursue another career.

Still, these recruiters list parents as the key decision maker for young people, especially 17-year olds, who require parental consent to join.

"Parental hesitation is the biggest problem I encounter" said Ziegler. Sometimes parents tell him that they won't allow their sons or daughters to join because of the perceived dangers they will face during the Global War on Terrorism. Though, many recruiters find that showing applicants the opportunities in the Guard, such as various career options, educational assistance and job skills they can acquire is a way to win over many parents.

"You've got a lot of parents [who] are supportive of programs like the National Guard," said Carr. "Their [child] is not working, he's out of school, he's not doing anything productive. It's an opportunity for them to work towards doing something productive."

However, there are other reasons why people enlist. According to Ziegler, an Afghanistan and Iraq veteran, he notices that many young recruits say their reason for joining the Guard is a chance to “give back to country.”

Yet some who want to serve are concerned about leaving family, friends and their community. Pownall says he uses the National Guard to overcome those objections.

“You have to be able to relate to the civilians and show them that they can be in the military and still have their full-time civilian life. They can have the best of both worlds... You can still serve your country and still be in your hometown.”

However, all these recruiters said they love what they do. And, despite the challenges they face, they know they have a valuable product.

“You’re able to have an impact on changing someone’s lifestyle,” said Carr. “Whether you look at it from an economic standpoint, education or so forth, your job is to help someone -- bottom line -- to pursue a career.”

And that’s what recruiters tell prospects when they’re “kicking the bo-bo.”

\$2,000 FOR BEING A “RECRUITER FOR A DAY”

Under the Guard’s G-RAP (Guard Recruiting Assistant Program), every M-Day Soldier can become an instant recruiter whenever they meet potential recruits – friends or strangers: on campus, at work, in a store or on the street. For every lead you provide, you’ll receive \$1,000 when that person finishes Basic Training; when they complete AIT, you’ll receive another \$1,000. Go to www.GuardRecruitingAssistant.com for details.

For information on how to become a full-time recruiter, call the Maryland Guard’s Recruiting & Retention Command at (410) 292-6625.



Jefferson Smithery III finesses his way through an obstacle course during the Annual Youth Camp, held at Aberdeen Proving Ground, in Aberdeen, Md. The Family Assistance Center and Family Readiness Youth Program partnered with the ChalleNGe program to make the event possible.

A young man with dark skin and short hair is crawling on sandy ground under several strands of barbed wire. He is wearing a light blue t-shirt and a red lanyard. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background shows more sand and some green grass.

Family Readiness



less

Text by Spc. Keith Muckler photography by Warrant Officer William Fearington

Family Readiness



Military children make their way through an obstacle course during the Annual Youth Camp, held at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, in Aberdeen, Md. The Family Assistance Center and Family Readiness Youth Program partnered with the ChalleNGe program to make the event possible.

The Family Assistance center provides support and assistance to Maryland National Guard families. They are spread in four locations throughout Maryland including; Towson, Reisterstown, Baltimore and Annapolis.

With Maryland National Guard Soldiers being deployed throughout the world who do families and Soldiers turn to when they have a question or problem about being deployed?

One person to go to is someone like Jeanne Benden, a family assistant specialist with the Maryland National Guard Family Readiness Program.

“We take a family and Soldier through the entire cycle of deployment,” said Benden. “We answer any questions or problems about benefits, TRICARE, life insurance, legal, finance or if they just need support.”

The Family Assistance Centers, part of the Family Readiness Program, help Soldiers, families and the communities on many different levels.

“There are hundreds of family programs the centers are involved with like the children in youth program summer camp, local dinners, holiday parties, emergency relief fund and various volunteer groups like the Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion and the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America.” said Steph Wilson, a family assistant specialist at Camp Fretterd in Reisterstown, Md.

Another role played by the FAC personnel is as liaison between civilian organizations and the Maryland Guard.

“The Girl Scouts contacted us because they wanted to donate dozens of Girl Scout cookies for care packages that were being sent to deployed Soldiers,” said Benden. “They also volunteered time helping put the care packages together,” said Benden.

The Family Readiness Program is primarily a family driven program of volunteers who give of themselves to assist one another.

There are currently about fifty volunteers who give time to the Family Readiness Program, said Master Sgt. Jeannette Wittman, the family program director. “I also have eight civilian contractors and three military personnel who work for me; we get a lot done with the few people we have.”



Military children move through an obstacle course during the Annual Youth Camp, held at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, in Aberdeen, Md. The Family Assistance Center and Family Readiness Youth Program partnered with the ChalleNGe program to make the event possible.

COUNTERDRUG

at Career Day

Text by Sgt. S. Patrick McCollum

When Sgt. Latia Adams, a drug demand reduction specialist with the Maryland Army National Guard Counterdrug Task Force set up her booth in the gymnasium of the Ridgely Elementary School in Ridgely, Md., it was career day. Representatives from occupations as diverse as chefs, nurses, and the Forest Service set up booths to show the children that they could be anything they wanted to be.

Adams, however, was not concerned so much with what career path the children would eventually take; rather her job was to make sure they made the right choices along the way when it comes to drugs. Her booth was filled with pictures, pencils, stress balls, handouts, bumper stickers, and pamphlets that show the consequences of drugs.

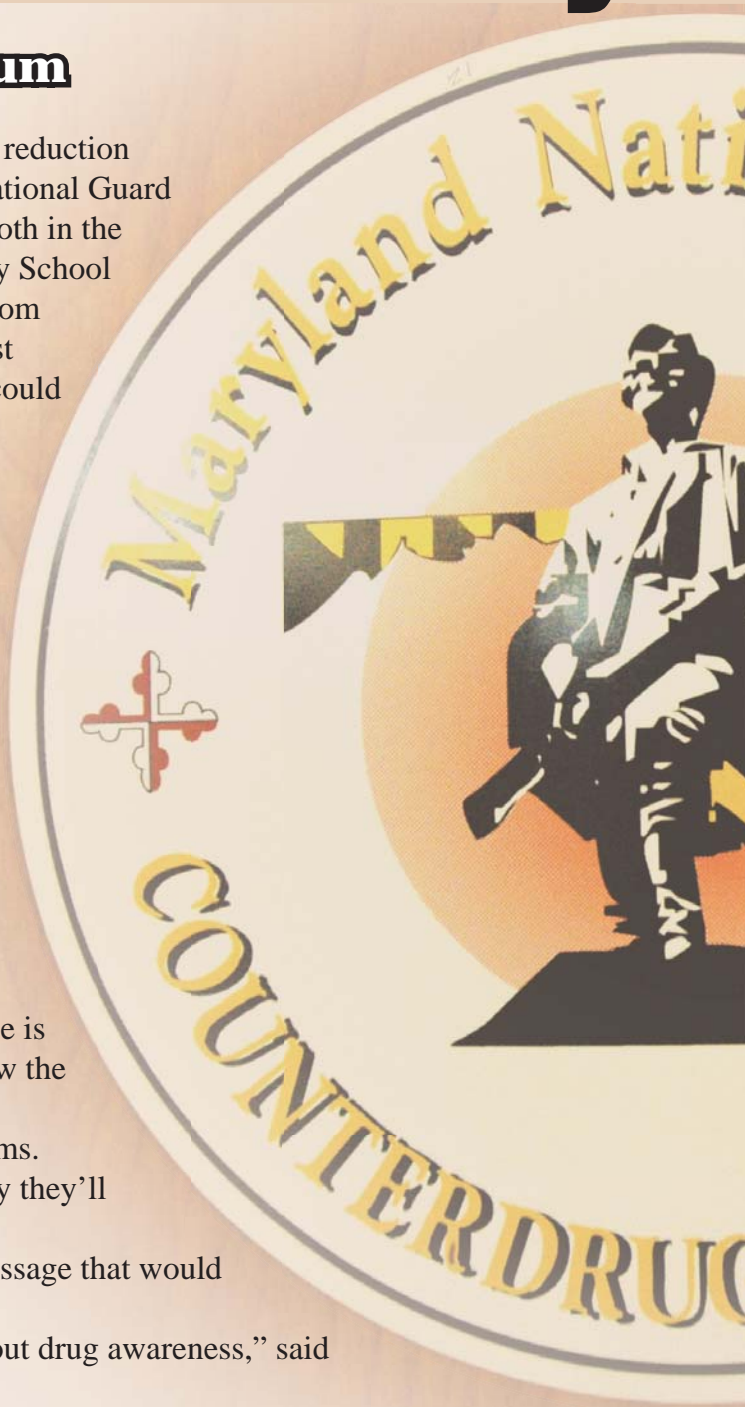
"We come, we set up our display and we pass out information literature so the kids could take it home to their parents," said Adams. This information is also given to teachers so that they can carry on the message, she added.

Setting up displays like this in elementary schools is essential to the task of demand reduction, she said. The goal is repetition. As time passes and the message is reinforced, this method will ensure children will know the consequences when the time comes.

"We need to hit the kids at a young age," said Adams. "They may hear it over and over again, but eventually they'll pick it up."

And the military uniform adds an impact to the message that would not otherwise be obtained.

"We'd have keynote speakers come in and talk about drug awareness," said



RUG

“But when Sgt. Adams came in and talked about drug awareness, our fifth graders left there saying ‘wow.’”

-Coletta Miller,
a guidance counselor
at Ridgely Elementary School
in Ridgely, Md.

Coletta Miller, a guidance counselor with the school. “But when Sgt. Adams came in and talked about drug awareness, our fifth graders left there saying ‘wow.’”

Sometimes that amazement comes from the attention getters. Those can range from the “Wheel of Misfortune,” a colorful wheel that shows the danger of each drug, to camouflage face painting, to a helicopter from the Reconnaissance, and Aerial Interdiction Detachment (RAID).

“Last year for career day we had the helicopter pilots come in and land,” said Miller. “The kids are going ‘gee if I’m a pilot then I’m not allowed to drink and do drugs.’ And we’re saying ‘you’re right.’”

Another aspect of Adams’ curriculum is respect through honesty. In a particular question-and-answer session, mutual respect paid off.

“Last year I had a question that a kid asked me that I didn’t honestly know. I wrote the kid a letter back and in response the entire class wrote me, thanking me for coming out to the school.”

As a result of this approach Adams said that feedback from communities the Task Force has visited is generally positive, citing specifically that underage drinking is down in some cases. Some don’t want her to leave.

“It’s always a warming experience,” said Adams. “Usually they say ‘I can’t believe you’re doing this, can you come back?’ They want me here everyday.”

At the end of Career Day Adams packed up her display into cases.

Piece by piece the pictures disappeared. The handouts, bumper stickers, and other knick-knacks returned to a plastic box for the next school visit.

Her van packed up, she would have to trust that the memories she left today adequately guided the way for these young students and children like them throughout Maryland.



Final Frame....



A woman awaits treatment from physicians from the 175th Wing, Maryland Air National Guard, in a schoolhouse in Luka, Bosnia as part of a joint force medical humanitarian effort to provide medical attention to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Photo by Spc. Loni Kingston